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ABSTRACT

This report describes Chicago's Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), which has long worked to mobilize neighborhood residents to maintain and improve the quality of community life and bring additional resources and services into the neighborhood. LSNA prioritizes the needs of low- and moderate-income residents. LSNA works to make schools centers of community life, develop school-community partnerships with parent leaders, and develop a parent-teacher mentor program. LSNA is one of five case studies in the Indicators Project on Education Organizing, which identified eight indicators of the impact of community organizing for school reform (leadership development, community power, social capital, public accountability, equity, school-community connection, positive school climate, and high quality curriculum and instruction). This report highlights LSNA's accomplishments in four areas: community power, social capital, school climate, and leadership development. The report presents a model of the relationship of indicators to goals of community organizing groups, introduces LSNA, describes Logan Square and its schools, presents LSNA's holistic plan, and discusses indicators and measures. It concludes by discussing future directions (e.g., changes in the external environment). Three appendices present definitions of indicator areas, the Indicators Project advisory group, and LSNA charts (strategies, results, and data sources). (SM)

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CROSS CITY CAMPAIGN FOR URBAN SCHOOL REFORM

PREPARED BY RESEARCH FOR ACTION

Case Study: **LSNA**

LOGAN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Strong Neighborhoods Strong Schools

The Indicators Project on Education Organizing

UD 035 294

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LOGAN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Prepared by

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with

CROSS CITY CAMPAIGN FOR URBAN SCHOOL REFORM
Chris Brown

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Strong Neighborhoods Strong Schools

The Indicators Project on Education Organizing

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The Indicators Project on Education Organizing

Logan Square Neighborhood Association is one of five case studies in *The Indicators Project*, an action-research project to document the contribution that community organizing makes to school reform, disseminate the findings, and forward the work these groups are doing. The project grows out of the work of the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform's Schools and Community program. The Cross City Campaign believes that while there is widespread agreement among educators and the public on the importance of "parent involvement" and "parents as first teachers," there is far less understanding of the role that strong, well-informed, powerful organizations of parent and community leaders can play in school reform. The Cross City Campaign invited Research for Action, a non-profit educational research organization with a history of studying community-school relations, to be its partner in examining the contribution such organizations can make in bringing about quality educational experiences and equity for urban students and in strengthening low-income urban neighborhoods.

See report: *Successful Community Organizing for School Reform* for a full discussion of the Education Organizing Indicators Framework and how accomplishments in the indicator areas work together to bring about change in schools and communities.

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The aim of the research was to develop an Education Organizing Indicators Framework that documents observable outcomes in schools and student learning. We developed the Framework by looking at the activities of organizing groups across multiple sites and categorizing their work within eight key indicator areas. The eight indicator areas are: leadership development, community power, social capital, public accountability, equity, school/community connections, positive school climate, and high quality instruction and curriculum. (See Appendix A for definitions of the indicator areas). We also developed a Theory of Change that shows how work in each of the indicator areas contributes to building community capacity and improving schools—ultimately increasing student learning. (See p. 6 for a model of the Theory of Change.)

A major purpose of this report and the project's other case studies is to show the accomplishments of community organizing for school reform by using the Education Organizing Indicators Framework. We illustrate the utility of the Framework for documenting the contribution of community organizing groups to school reform by looking at selected organizing "stories" in some depth. In each report, we use four of the indicator areas to interpret the organizing stories, showing evidence that the group is making a difference. The report also shows the complexity and challenge of community organizing for school reform. It illustrates the range of strategies that groups use, how local context affects organizing and outcomes, as well as how organizing spurs and shapes local education reform.

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING GROUPS

Community organizing groups working for school reform share the following characteristics:

- They work to change public schools to make them more equitable and effective for all students.
- They build a large base of members who take collective action to further their agenda.
- They build relationships and collective responsibility by identifying shared concerns among neighborhood residents and creating alliances and coalitions that cross neighborhood and institutional boundaries.
- They develop leadership among community residents to carry out agendas that the membership determines through a democratic governance structure.
- They use the strategies of adult education, civic participation, public action, and negotiation to build power for residents of low- to moderate-income communities that result in action to address their concerns.

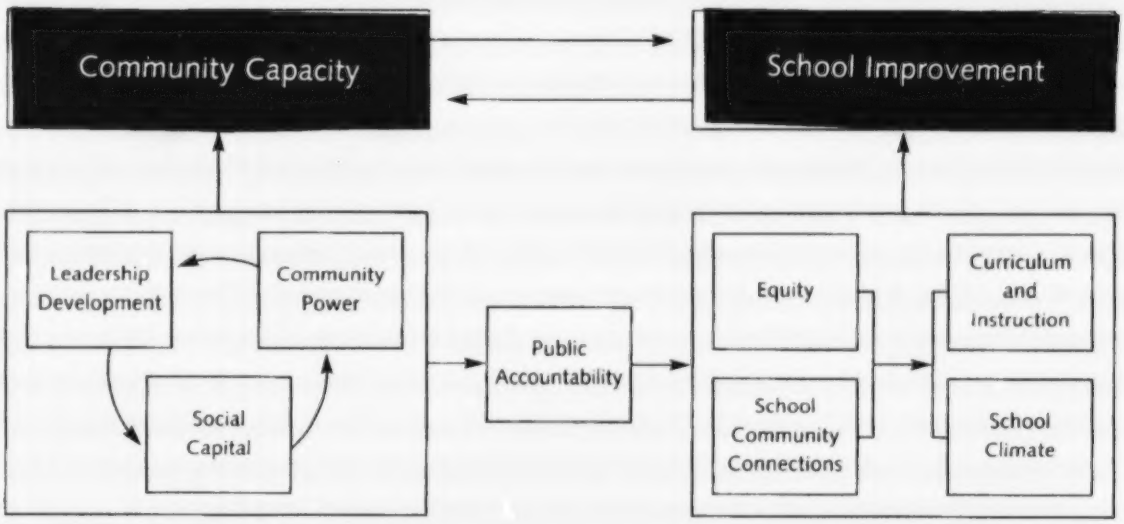
RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to develop an indicators framework the research design included four levels of investigation:

- Research for Action (RFA) and the Cross City Campaign (CCC) conducted a broad search and created a database of 140 community organizing groups working on school reform nationwide.
- RFA and CCC collaborated to select 19 groups for lengthy telephone interviews. Analysis of those interviews yielded a preliminary indicators framework.
- RFA and CCC, with the help of a national advisory group (see appendix B) selected five groups for case studies.
- RFA research teams and CCC staff conducted two site-visits of three days each in spring and fall of 2000 to each of the five sites. Interviews were conducted with a wide array of public school stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, elected officials, and education reform groups. The researchers also observed community and school events relevant to local organizing.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT IS TO SHOW THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING.

Theory of Change: Relationship of Community Capacity Building and School Improvement



The theory of change model shows the pathway of influence between building community capacity and school improvement. Work in three indicator areas—leadership development, community power, and social capital—increases civic participation and leverages power through partnerships and relationships within and across communities, as well as with school district, civic, and elected officials. Public accountability is the hinge that connects community capacity with school improvement. Increased community participation and strong relationships together broaden accountability for improving public education for children of low- to moderate-income families. Public accountability creates the political will to forward equity and school/community connection, thereby improving school climate, curriculum, and instruction making them more responsive to communities, laying the basis for improved student learning and achievement. Stronger schools, in turn, contribute to strengthening community capacity.

Introduction to Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) has a 40-year history of mobilizing neighborhood residents to maintain and improve the quality of community life and to bring additional resources and services into the Logan Square neighborhood of Chicago. LSNA prioritizes the needs of low- and moderate-income neighborhood residents, often first or second generation immigrants from Latin America, but also represents the rich economic, cultural, and racial diversity of Logan Square. LSNA's work in reshaping neighborhood schools to better meet the needs of the community evolves from its overall organizing approach, which focuses on developing relationships as the foundation for social change, on building a community that can speak for itself, and on strong neighborhood-based leadership.

According to LSNA, strong communities need strong schools. As written in LSNA's Holistic Plan, the organization's three overarching goals in creating strong schools are to: 1) make schools centers of community life through Community Learning Centers, 2) develop school/community partnerships with parents as leaders, and 3) develop the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program to help parents develop their skills, assist teachers, and build strong relationships in the community. Currently nine neighborhood schools collaborate with the community through their membership in LSNA. LSNA's close collaboration with local schools began in the early 1990s when LSNA spearheaded a community effort to end school overcrowding. The campaign resulted in five new annexes and two new middle schools. Just as importantly, the successful campaign both demonstrated LSNA's power as a community organization and built a foundation of mutual trust and respect between the schools and the community.

Since the campaign against overcrowding, LSNA's work with schools has been critical to increasing the quality of programming and services available to children and families in Logan Square. LSNA's organizing activities serve to: promote widespread democratic participation in the schools; enhance communication between parents, teachers, and children; and bring needed resources into the community. LSNA is active in all eight indicator areas used in this project.[1] In this report, we relate LSNA's accomplishments in detail in four of the areas.[2] The four areas are:

- COMMUNITY POWER
- SOCIAL CAPITAL
- SCHOOL CLIMATE
- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

THE MACARTHUR DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

RFA is also documenting LSNA's work for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Building Community Capacity Program. The Foundation believes that in order to be effective in fostering individual growth and community development, a community must have the ability to mobilize and use the resources of members, along with outside resources. LSNA, a grantee of the MacArthur Foundation, has worked with Research for Action to create valid and useful documentation of its work, with a focus on two areas—education and housing. Joanna Brown, an LSNA organizer, is also a collaborating researcher with Research for Action on this study. This report draws on findings from the MacArthur-sponsored documentation project.

NOTES

1. For a chart representing LSNA's work in all eight indicator areas, see Appendix C. This chart is not comprehensive, but does illustrate the kinds of strategies LSNA has used in each area and examples of its achievements.

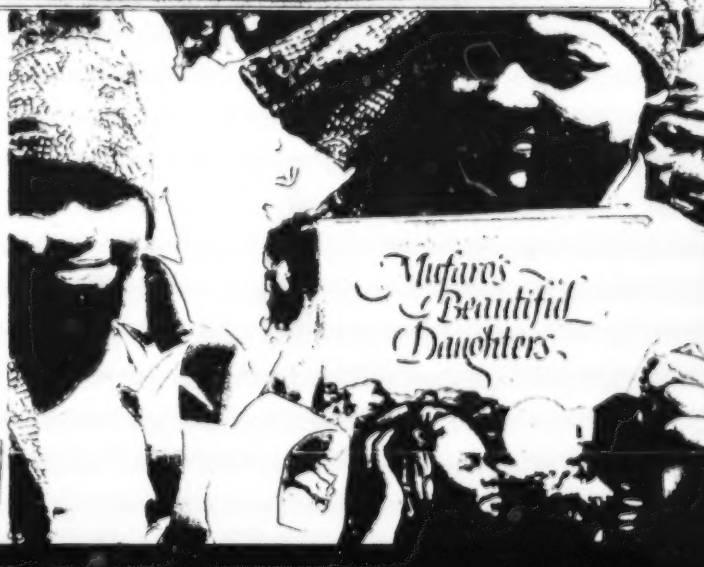
2. The data supporting the accomplishments of LSNA were gathered during site visits in spring and fall 2000. The report is not comprehensive of all LSNA has accomplished, but is intended to illustrate what documentation and measurement of its accomplishments might look like.

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association

LSNA is a multi-issue organization whose work is guided by a Holistic Plan which includes improving local public schools, developing youth leadership, enhancing neighborhood safety, maintaining affordable housing, and revitalizing the local economy. The Core Committee and issues committees revise the plan on a yearly basis. It is approved by the membership of the organization, which includes both individuals and representatives of forty-seven neighborhood organizations.

LSNA was started in the early 1960s by a group of local churches, businesses, and homeowners to address neighborhood concerns arising from rapid suburbanization and deindustrialization of the Chicago metropolitan area. Around the time of LSNA's formation, longtime residents of Logan Square, primarily working-class families of European descent, were leaving the neighborhood, and new residents were attracted to it, originally Cubans and then Puerto Rican families from nearby Humboldt Park. Since then, the neighborhood has become increasingly Latino, mostly Mexican, Puerto Rican and Central American. According to the 2000 census, Latinos made up 65.1% of Logan Square's population.

Changing demographics of Logan Square are reflected in the changing demographics of LSNA leaders and members. In the late 1980s, LSNA's Board, which had been predominantly Anglo, made an explicit commitment to diversify and to hire a new director committed to building a racially and economically diverse organization. This diversity is represented in LSNA's Executive Committee, which in the spring of 2000 was composed of the chairperson of LSNA's home daycare network, three former parent mentors who now participate in governance, instruction, and other volunteer activities at their schools, a local school administrator, and a local banker. The six-member committee consisted of four Latinas and two Anglo men.



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Logan Square and Its Schools

"I arrive to interview the outreach team about the new community survey they are doing for Monroe School Community Learning Center. Six Latinas are sitting in the school's teachers' lounge. The organizer told me that the mothers had taken it upon themselves to move into the teachers' lounge, which she perceived as their sense of ownership of the school. When I arrive, each woman has an orange folder in front of her, and they're looking intently at maps that are blocked off with colored markers to show the different parts of the neighborhood. They're engaged in animated discussion about who should go where."

"We start the focus group, and they agree that everyone on the outreach committee participated in the Community Learning Center last year. Margarita[3] works in the Center. Marisol is on the student council for the Center. Everyone has taken GED or English classes. Someone else jokes, "This is the organization of the Monroe School." Three of the women were parent mentors. Latitia helped recruit parents to run in the most recent Local School Council election and is also the president of the bilingual committee." REA RESEARCHER'S FIELDNOTES, FALL 2000

As this vignette suggests, parents in Logan Square demonstrate a sense of engagement and ownership unusual in urban schools. While some opportunities for involvement are integral to Chicago school reform, the level of parent engagement has been generated through LSNA's organizing efforts. During the late 1980s, when LSNA intensified its parent organizing, most public schools in Logan Square were over 95 percent low-income and 90 percent Latino. Median family income in Logan Square dropped 15% during the 1980s to $22,500. Middle class professionals of all ethnic and racial groups were still drawn to parts of Logan Square because of its high-quality housing and proximity to downtown Chicago, but in general they either didn't have children or didn't utilize the public schools. Student mobility rates in Logan Square schools ranged from 30-44% annually. Standardized test scores were low, with the majority of students scoring in the bottom percentiles in both math and reading on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. When LSNA began its major school campaigns in the early 1990s, more than 13% of Logan Square residents had immigrated to the U.S. in the previous decade.

During the late 1980s, community groups across Chicago were mobilizing in support of school reform legislation and working to make the reform a success by recruiting and training parent and community members to run as candidates in Local School Council (LSC) elections. Under Chicago's school reform law, LSCs have the power to hire principals and approve budgets.

For years, individual schools in Logan Square had been negotiating with the Chicago Board of Education to end severe overcrowding. During the early 1990s, LSNA played a crucial role in bringing schools across the neighborhood together to address this common problem. Since the successful campaign against overcrowding, LSNA has worked with LSCs to seek out and select principals who are committed to cooperating with the community. Building on relationships with principals who feel a commitment to the community, as well as on relationships developed during the campaign against overcrowding, LSNA has collaborated with schools to develop innovative, community-centered programs.

In the past five years, all LSNA elementary schools have experienced significant increases in student achievement, even while the demographics remained constant. For example, from 1996 to 2001, the

NOTES

3. To preserve confidentiality, people's real names are not used in this memo. The exception is where we are quoting directly from other public documents.

percentage of students at one school reading at or above the national norm on the yearly Iowa Test of Basic Skills rose from 17.5% to 29.3%. In math, the number rose from 19.5% to 31.4%. Other schools showed similar increases over the same time period. Teacher surveys and parent and principal interviews attribute many of these gains to the regular presence of parents in classrooms through LSNA's Parent-Teacher Mentor Program.

Public school stakeholders and school reform advocates interviewed for this project concur that LSNA has built one of the most productive school/community partnerships in Chicago. LSNA's Parent-Teacher Mentor Program and Community Learning Centers are widely seen as model programs for bringing families into schools and engaging low-income parents with their children's education in new and empowering ways. Although democratic processes within LSNA occasionally lead to policy stances that challenge the Board of Education or the positions of other education reform groups, even stakeholders interviewed for this project who have disagreed with some of LSNA's positions recognize LSNA's important role in improving neighborhood schools and as a powerful advocate for low-income families and communities.

LSNA's Holistic Plan: Recognizing the Interdependence of Schools and Communities

"LSNA has been very active in [making schools] a center of community, not just a place where kids and a group of professionals descend...It is not just a place where you can depend on kids to receive an education. but also the place where you participate in the governance and deciding what goes on there and building it up and helping it grow."

LOGAN SQUARE MINISTER, SPRING 2000

"When I came into the school for the first time, it was important for me to understand what was happening, but I was one of those people who were very timid. After three or four years, I got more involved. I don't understand it all yet, but I know the importance of getting involved. I'm new here, but I'm happy to be part of the Local School Council and president of one of the school committees."

PARENT LEADER, FALL 2000

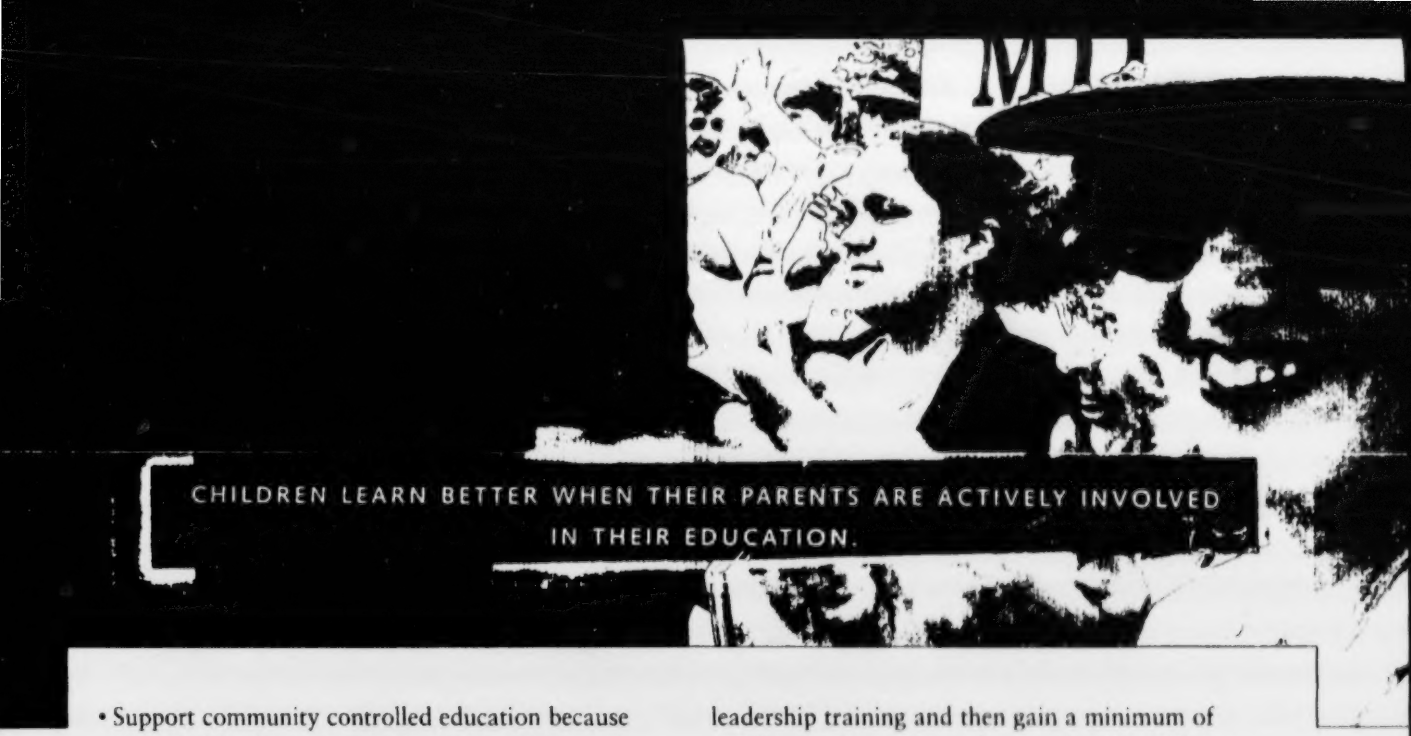
LSNA's work with schools is part of its holistic approach to addressing the needs and dreams of the Logan Square community. Although it had been a multi-issue organizing group since the early 1960s, in 1994, LSNA unveiled an innovative long-term plan to rebuild the Logan Square Community. *"We decided it's time to envision the community we want to live in and then build it,"* said the chair of LSNA's Holistic Committee. "We want to build on our many strengths, rather than just react to problems." (LSNA press release, May 5, 1994). Representatives of thirty-four local schools, churches, block clubs, and social service agencies—including seniors and youth, parents and pastors, teachers, residents and businesspeople—worked together for over two years in small committees and large groups to set forth a specific agenda for building a healthier and more stable neighborhood.

The first Holistic Plan included resolutions relating to education, housing, safety, and jobs. Parents, teachers, principals, and community members built on relationships they had developed in the campaign against overcrowding to write three education resolutions, which focused on the interdependence of the schools and the community. In its first Holistic Plan,[4] LSNA resolved to:

- Develop schools as community centers because *"the health of any community is dependent on the availability of common space for interaction, education, service provision, recreation, culture and arts."*
- Train parents to work in the classrooms of LSNA schools because *"children learn better when their parents are actively involved in their education."*

NOTES

4. This information is based on LSNA documents prepared for the 32nd Annual Congress, May 1994.



CHILDREN LEARN BETTER WHEN THEIR PARENTS ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THEIR EDUCATION.

- Support community controlled education because the *"health of any community is dependent on the quality of education provided to its residents."* This resolution included support for training for LSC members and a program developed by local banks and LSNA to help Logan Square teachers buy homes in the neighborhood.

Following the adoption of the first Holistic Plan, LSNA received funding to pilot the first Parent-Teacher Mentor Program. Local School Council members and other parents worked with LSNA to bring the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program into their schools and then to keep their schools open after regular school hours for Community Learning Centers. In addition to working directly with parents, LSNA has continued to involve principals and teachers in LSNA activities such as quarterly principal meetings, the neighborhood-wide Education Committee, and the LSNA Core Committee (which provides guidance for an annual evaluation of LSNA's work and the revision of LSNA's Holistic Plan).

LSNA's recognition of the interconnections between school and community and the importance of school/community collaboration is well illustrated by its two largest programs. The Parent-Teacher Mentor Program, which has graduated over 840 parents, was developed to provide stay-at-home, often socially isolated mothers with an opportunity to participate in leadership training and become more engaged in their children's school. The principal of Funston Elementary School originated the idea for the program, which pays parents a small stipend to attend leadership training and then gain a minimum of 100 hours of training as they work with children in classrooms. Partnering with the Funston School and a technical assistance consultant (Community Organizing for Family Issues), LSNA developed a program with far-reaching effects. As parent mentors, mothers (and occasionally fathers) increase their understanding of the current culture and expectations of the schools; they take on new roles such as tutoring, reading to children, or coordinating literacy programs; and, they also learn that the skills honed by "just" being a good parent translate into leadership skills in the larger community.

The Community Learning Centers are another major example of school/community collaboration in Logan Square. LSNA and the schools had agreed that the new school annexes would be open for community activities. The first Community Learning Center was created by the first group of graduates from Funston's pilot Parent-Teacher Mentor Program. The women developed a community survey and began knocking on doors to find out what the neighborhood wanted in a community center. They then advocated with citywide providers to get the desired programs. Since then, Funston's Community Learning Center and five others, which collectively serve over 1,400 children and adults a week, continue to be guided by the vision and energy of neighborhood residents.

The programs generated through school-community collaboration in Logan Square are also a significant source of income for the neighborhood, increasing economic security for the parents, providing bridges

to paid employment, and increasing resources for neighborhood schools. LSNA's programs provided approximately $127,000 in the past year to support daytime school operations through stipends for parent mentors and support for mathematics and reading activities. In addition, at least $305,000 more dollars were paid directly to community residents and businesses through the salaries of Community Learning Center staff and purchases of food and supplies.

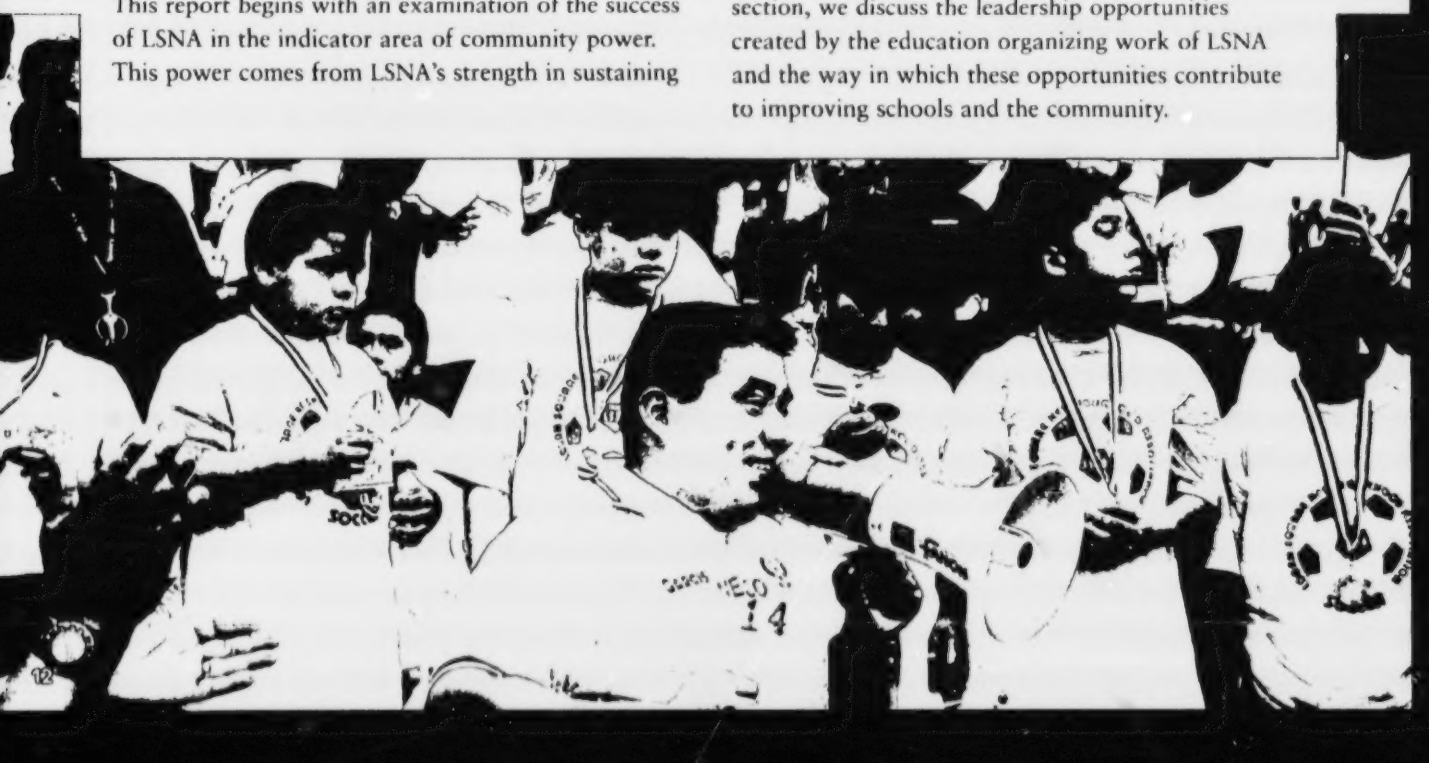
Indicators and Measures

LSNA is active in every indicator area. This report, however, discusses LSNA's activity in four of the eight indicator areas: community power, social capital, school climate, and leadership development. We selected these areas because they were particularly salient in both the interviews we conducted and the events we observed during site visits. Archival documentation, including reports and newspaper clippings, supports these as areas of LSNA accomplishment.

The indicator areas highlighted in this report reflect LSNA's ability to use and maintain community power to create strong, respectful partnerships between the schools and the community. Because LSNA parents, principals, and teachers are all members of a powerful community organization, the campaigns and programs they create are based on parent/professional relationships that are different from those that traditionally characterize urban schools.

This report begins with an examination of the success of LSNA in the indicator area of community power. This power comes from LSNA's strength in sustaining campaigns over time, developing a strong organizational identity and drawing political attention to its agenda. LSNA's successful campaign to alleviate school overcrowding, which involved gaining political recognition and winning new buildings for neighborhood schools, is one illustration of its power. LSNA's power in the realm of education continues to build as LSNA leaders and members take active roles in their Local School Councils, create school-based programs that are controlled by the community, and successfully advocate for city, state, and national funding for these programs. Second, the report examines LSNA's accomplishments in the area of social capital. The LSNA organizing model is a relational one. Its goal is to build networks of people who can act collectively around shared concerns. LSNA has worked hard and successfully to build relationships among parents, between parents and teachers, and among principals in the neighborhood.

The report looks next at the impact of LSNA's organizing in an indicator area directly related to outcomes for students, school climate. We show that the increased presence of parents in the Logan Square schools is helping to create an orderly, disciplined, and respectful climate for learning. Lastly, the report examines the area of leadership development. One of the primary tasks of community organizing is helping community members become leaders. It is the strength of these leaders that ensures that the organizing stays focused on improving the life chances of low- and moderate-income families and communities. In this section, we discuss the leadership opportunities created by the education organizing work of LSNA and the way in which these opportunities contribute to improving schools and the community.



First Indicator Area: Community Power

LSNA's *sustained campaigns* over time, *its clear organizational identity,* and its success in gaining *political recognition for its agenda,* are all evidence of the community power that LSNA is using to make Logan Square schools into responsive, high-quality institutions. LSNA's capacity to demonstrate community power ensures that the voices, values, and needs of LSNA members are major forces in shaping the community's schools. Community power is a critical feature of LSNA's ability to enter into school/community collaborations as a full partner, based on relationships of trust and mutual respect.

Sustained Campaigns

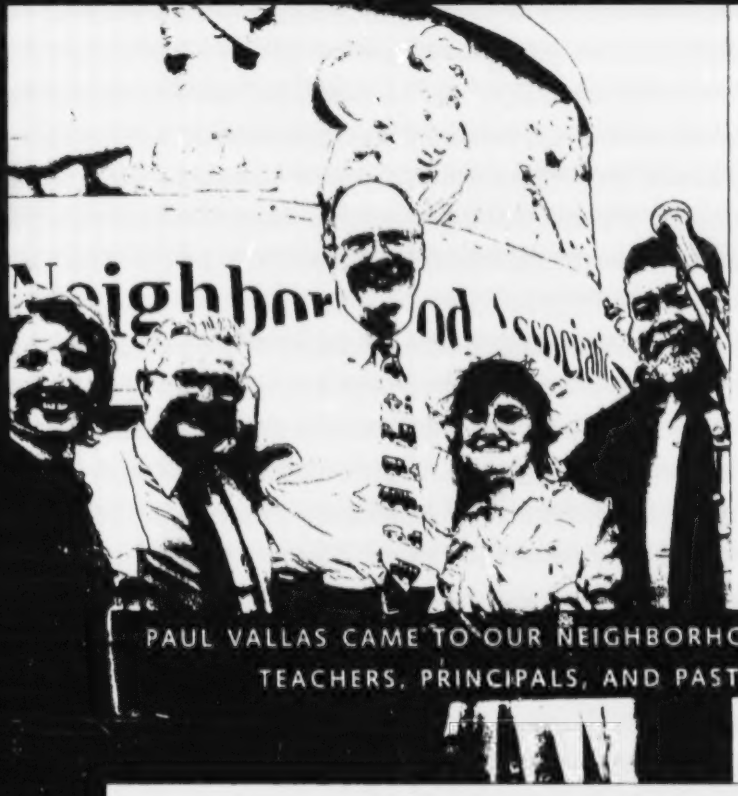
"After years of meetings with the Board of Education, they finally bought the old Ames property for a new middle school. But that wasn't the end of it. One morning, we got a phone call from one of our leaders saying that the Board of Ed was closing a deal on the sale of the property to a private developer that afternoon. Immediately, the Education Committee and the parent mentors were on the phone to the parents who had been working on the campaign. Two hours later, hundreds of community people were picketing. Later that day, we found out that they had cancelled the deal. Finally, in 1997, after six years of organizing, ground was broken for the Ames Middle School." RFA RESEARCHER'S FIELDNOTES, BASED ON STORIES ABOUT THE FOUNDING OF AMES MIDDLE SCHOOL TOLD BY LSNA LEADERS, MAY 1999

LSNA's ability to sustain campaigns over time is one important measure of a strong community base, which contributes to effective school/community collaborations. LSNA's campaign against overcrowding began in the early 1990s and continued for over five years. During our fieldwork, RFA heard many stories of the abysmal conditions in Logan Square schools during those years: 45 children in a classroom; classes meeting in the nurse's office or on the stage and auditorium floor; art and music classes cancelled because the space was needed for regular classroom instruction. During the first phase of the campaign against overcrowding, parents from three elementary schools proved that they could work together to identify a mutually acceptable location for a new middle school.

The first victory spurred parents from five more elementary schools to push for additional space. Together, parents from these eight elementary schools spent another year and a half preparing to appeal to the Board of Education. As we were told by a former president of LSNA, who was also a parent and LSC chair,

"There were many meetings with parents to prepare for going down to the Board of Education. What was funny was that no one would commit in a large group. But we went around and got individual commitments. We had many, many meetings. It was a year and a half of meetings. And then we finally all came together in one big room. You could feel the tension in the room. And once we started the meeting it was like, "Well, you know, so and so, you said that if so and so supported it, you will support it," and we would call on the names, "Well, are you here in support?" It was empowering because you finally beat this huge Board of Ed."

Once the Board of Education had firmly committed itself to the buildings, LSNA began another round of organizing, this time to gain a seat at the table in the process of principal selection for the yet to be created Ames Middle School. Although LSCs have the right and the obligation to hire the principal for an existing school, the CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, Paul Vallas, insisted on choosing the principal for the new middle school. To convince Vallas of the value of community input, parent mentors and LSC members from two of Ames feeder schools, Mozart and



PAUL VALLAS CAME TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD TO GET A SENSE OF HOW PARENTS, TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND PASTORS WERE WORKING TOGETHER

Funston, visited his office to share with him the important work that LSNA was doing in the Logan Square schools. A few days later, Paul Vallas came to Logan Square for a meeting about LSNA's school-based Community Learning Centers.

According to LSNA's Executive Director,

"If you don't have power, you're not going to have a meeting with Paul Vallas. We told him he needed to come to the neighborhood and get a sense of how parents, teachers, principals, and pastors were working together. He was trying to change the standards for the Chicago Public Schools then, and our president at the time told him, "We need you, but you also need us. He needed the parents; he needed the principals; he needed the teachers. He got the point. At the end of the meeting, Vallas came and said, "We want to see your top education leaders." That was when he said we could form the committee for the principal selection."

A committee made up of local principals and LSC members selected as principal a local teacher who had been a leader in the fight against overcrowding, was at that time LSNA's vice president, and had expressed a strong commitment to making Ames "a community-centered school." Vallas agreed with the selection.

These examples show that LSNA has strong community leaders who can sustain campaigns over the time it takes to develop power and "gain a seat at the table." The fact that LSNA was able to exert such an influence on Chicago Public Schools' policy-makers won respect for LSNA's power, and enabled LSNA to enter into school/community collaborations as an equal partner.

LSNA's Strong Organizational Identity

LSNA's power as a community organization is also evidenced in its clear identity as a multi-issue, community-based organization that represents the needs and dreams of its ethnically, racially, and economically diverse neighborhood. LSNA has succeeded in becoming an organization which can provide services to meet community needs without following the model of more traditional service agencies, where low-income people are positioned solely as recipients of services. Strong community leadership within the organization, democratic

decision-making, and fidelity to the Holistic Plan ensure that LSNA continues to represent community interests. LSNA's strong organizational identity is apparent from its neighborhood-based leadership structure and the extensive public recognition of LSNA's work.

LSNA's leadership structure and approach to organizing are designed to develop and sustain strong community leadership within the organization. LSNA offers multiple avenues for involvement, both formal and informal, which provide ongoing opportunities for the development and participation of articulate neighborhood spokespeople and strategists. Neighborhood-based leadership is also evident on LSNA's key governing bodies, including its Issues Committee, Core Committee, and Executive Board. Three of the six members of the Executive Board are parent leaders from the community.

LSNA's involvement in neighborhood schools also provides settings for the growth of community leaders. During the period of RFA's research, we have observed a new set of education leaders, following in the footsteps of a former generation of parent leaders who led the struggle for new buildings and brought the Parent-Teacher Mentor Programs and Community Learning Centers to their schools. Many of the earlier education leaders are still involved with LSNA, but now have staff positions with LSNA or other community organizations.

LSNA's strong organizational identity and ability to build community power are also reflected in the extensive public recognition awarded LSNA's efforts and achievements. Representatives of neighborhood banks, churches, and the Logan Square YMCA are members of the LSNA Board. These organizations worked closely with LSNA on its Holistic Plan to develop shared approaches for bringing affordable housing and new resources into the community. A former LSNA president, currently director of the neighborhood YMCA, describes how LSNA's identity as a diverse and unified community group helps it to gain public recognition.

"The Holistic Plan forces us to interact with each other...And we come up with very creative solutions and look at how we can best utilize our resources. It also has the influence to [get] the attention of the mayor or the superintendent of the Board of Education. We will have their support because they know we're all working together. And that has a lot of credibility with funders, too. When we present a proposal and everybody's at the table, who's going to deny that?"

Examples of public recognition during the period of this research include the Chicago Community Trust's 2001 James Brown Award for Outstanding Community Service, extensive radio and television coverage of LSNA's Parent-Teacher Mentor Program, and LSNA's hosting a site visit from a national consortium of education funders. Funding is also evidence for public recognition of LSNA as an organization able to create school/community partnerships and LSNA's multiple sources of funding enhance its power within school/community collaborations. LSNA's school-based programs are funded through many sources, including: the Chicago Board of Education; the Chicago Department of Human Services; the Chicago Annenberg Challenge (a school reform initiative that supported LSNA as an external partner to five Logan Square schools); the MacArthur Foundation; the Polk Bros. Foundation and several other smaller Chicago foundations; the Illinois State Board of Education; the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs; the Illinois Community College Board; and the Federal government's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

Political Attention to LSNA's Agenda

As a result of LSNA's sustained campaigns, its strong organizational identity, and its successful programs, LSNA has gained substantial political recognition for its approach to school/community collaboration. Evidence of LSNA's political recognition includes:

- LSNA's ongoing relationships with city and state politicians and school district administrators. Politicians and administrators such as Paul Vallas (former CEO of Chicago Public Schools), State Senator Miguel del Valle, and many aldermen have met over the years with LSNA leaders and have supported policies to open up public schools to community groups. LSNA's relationship with the

top administration of Chicago Public Schools is continuing with the current CEO, Arne Duncan. LSNA also has built relationships with national political representatives. These politicians and others, such as Paul Vallas, have met with and responded to the demands of LSNA parents to open up public schools as community centers.

- LSNA's campaign for state funding for community centers. In the spring of 1999, LSNA's two state senators, Miguel del Valle and Lisa Madigan, and state representative Willie Delgado recognized the work of LSNA and used it as a model for a statewide bill to provide funds for after-school programs for children and families. LSNA mobilized community members, school leaders, and Community Learning Center students for a letter writing campaign and testimony before the state legislature. Although the Senate Rules Committee killed the bill, LSNA did succeed in receiving state money to provide partial funding for the Community Learning Centers for a year.
- An LSNA leader was invited to testify before then President Clinton and Vice President Gore about the value of after-school programming. Subsequently, the Federal government has recognized LSNA's approach to school/community collaboration by awarding a three-year (2001-2004) 21st Century grant to fund the Community Learning Centers.

Second Indicator Area: Social Capital

LSNA's organizing model is a relational one; its major approach to organizing is to build networks of people within and across communities who can act collectively on their shared concerns. We use the term "social capital" as a way of referring to these relationships of mutual trust within and across communities. The building of social capital is especially evident when parents are beginning to develop relationships with each other and with school staff. These relationships lead to increased parent engagement in the life of schools. Social capital is also evident in the relationships that school principals in Logan Square have developed with LSNA and with each other. In this section, we begin by looking at new *relationships of trust developed among community members* as they become involved with the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program and the Community Learning Centers. We then look at *enhanced levels of communication between parents and teachers,* and finally we look at *new networks of principals in LSNA schools.*

New Relationships among Community Members

Both parent mentors and school staff have described the dramatic personal transformation and newfound sense of trust and community for parents who participate in parent mentor training and doing

outreach for community centers (for the story of how LSNA started these programs, please see the box "Creating Schools as Centers of Community" on page 19). The programs create "bonding capital" (relationships of trust among people who are similar in terms of race, class, ethnicity, or social roles), as low-income women share stories about their lives and support each other in recognizing the strengths they already have, as well as in developing visions and goals. Typically the parents most involved in LSNA's programs are low-income women who have not been actively involved in their children's schools, in neighborhood organizations, or in the formal job market. Isabel, a Puerto Rican woman who grew up in the mainland United States and who had attended college for a time, told us a story of social isolation and lack of personal direction that is common among this group and that we heard over and over again in interviews, focus groups, and public presentations.

"I used to be one of those moms who just dropped their kids off at the school, but the first week we had the parent mentor training program it opened my eyes a lot, because you are so used to thinking about your kids, the house and everybody else, that you are never thinking about yourself."

Many of the parent mentor participants are either recent immigrants who don't speak English or women who have limited social contacts outside of their kinship networks. U.S.-born women, as well as immigrants from Latin America, vividly described new connections with other adults as well as with their own children that resulted from their participation in the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program. Isabel, who is now a parent organizer for the program, told us,

"The program is great because it changes a lot of people's lives. Not only for myself, but when other mothers first get into the program, their self-esteem, and everything is so low. When they first started, they were like really quiet; they would keep to themselves. And now you can't get them to shut up sometimes. I mean you see the complete difference, they really change their life. They are more outgoing. They are willing to do more for their kids. It's like night and day, they're so different."

Another mother described a similar experience of connection with the larger community while working with students, teachers, and other parents on outreach for the new Ames Community Learning Center.

"The Community Center has made us. I have been married for 15 years and I had never had a job. In the beginning, I had some problems with my husband because he didn't want me to go out. And I told him, really - what I need is to go out, to know, to talk. And here I learned to talk because before my world was my daughter and my husband. And now I feel different. I'm a different person."

The coordinator of the Funston Community Center also described the creation of new relationships among parents:

"The fact that parents have more roles in the school is important. We communicate a lot among ourselves. The parents know and support one another more. So, for example, if one parent cannot pick up her child, then that parent calls another parent to do it and it is done. I have also seen parents wanting

to work for other parents. They are more interested in the Center and how everyone is developing their skills...When the Center first started, I thought it will not last because the community was not going to respond. And I was wrong. We have seen an overwhelming response from the community."

Enhanced Communication between Parents and Teachers

Improved relationships between parents and teachers, known as "bridging capital," are another result of school/community partnerships in Logan Square classrooms. This evolving sense of trust is critical for schools in low-income communities and communities of color where parents and school staff tend to blame each other for children's lack of progress. As parents work closely with teachers, they develop an understanding of what actually happens in the classrooms and learn how they can help their own children. This leads to increased parent involvement with homework, in reading to their children, and in leading activities such as Family Math and Family Literacy. As teachers work with parents, they develop new respect for the resources that low-income, immigrant mothers can bring to education, both for their own children and for the school as a whole.

Parent mentors universally attest that working directly with teachers helps them understand how important it is to support the teachers and help their own children meet the requirements for success in school. As one parent said, *"Being here has helped me work more with my children. I pay attention to the work that is assigned to them. I know how they work and how to help them improve."*

Parents' respect for teachers increases as they see the challenges of teaching in the overcrowded Chicago schools. According to one parent mentor,

"At first I was so nervous and did not really trust the teachers, but all that changed once I worked in the classroom. Now we trust each other. At first, I thought that teachers did not do their work or that they really did not want to work with children. Once I started to work here, I have learned that the teachers work a lot and that with so many children in the classroom it is very difficult to work alone."

From the teachers' perspective, parents become valued partners in the classrooms. As one teacher says,

"At this school, we have seen [the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program] work very well. Those teachers who have parents in the classroom do not get tired of praising them. They really see them as essential to their teaching...And believe me, teachers who have parent mentors in their classes see them as more than a mentee. They see them as partners and friends."

One teacher explained,

"Before, parents were seen as disciplinarians at home and teachers were the educators at the school. Now parents are seen as partners in educating the children in the school and in the home."

A parent leader made the same point.

"Now teachers have a need for parents in their classrooms. Before teachers did not want a parent in their room working with them. Maybe teachers thought the parents did not have the ability to work in the classroom and now they have seen that parents can."

Creating Schools As Centers of Community

School leaders were among the creators of LSNA's first Holistic Plan. *"One of the things we really wanted to encourage was more parent involvement in the schools,"* explained Rita Riveron, LSC president at Mozart school. *"There were always the same four or five of us volunteering for everything. We felt that to really improve the school we were going to need to get other parents involved. So increased parent involvement was one of the resolutions of LSNA's Holistic Plan and we set about finding ways to achieve this."*

Another resolution of the Holistic Plan came from LSNA's and the school's fight for the school annexes. In a neighborhood with very few public spaces, it seemed a crime that the schools sat empty 75% of the time. So when the annexes were built, it was with the idea that they would become community centers outside of regular school hours. This idea was also incorporated into the Holistic Plan and was met so enthusiastically that even schools that didn't have the new annexes, such as Brentano, were on board for creating new community centers.

In the spring of 1995, in cooperation with COFI (Community Organizing Around Family Issues), LSNA trained the first forty parents as mentors at Mozart and Funston Elementary Schools in preparation for working in classrooms with the students. During the training, parents were asked to think of themselves as leaders and to set personal and school/community goals. This first group had a very hard time even thinking of goals for themselves. As Maria Montesinos, a Mozart parent said, *"I am not used to thinking of myself. Others, yes, but not myself. But the training and follow-up we had was good. It really forced us to think about ourselves, why thinking of goals for ourselves helps other people."*

Indeed it did. Many of the Parent Mentors had set personal goals around obtaining their GEDs or learning English. However, they were finding it very difficult to achieve their goals. Places that offered GED were too far to walk or entailed complicated public transportation routes; childcare wasn't offered, or was an additional charge, or had a mile-long waiting list. A group of seven Funston Parent Mentors dreamed of having adult education classes right in their school, with convenient hours and free childcare. The Logan Square Neighborhood Association was right there with them. Coming from a community organizing rather than a social service perspective, they realized that in order to create a successful community center with programs that people really wanted to attend, they had to find out what people in the neighborhood really wanted, and what was keeping them from getting it. They had a pretty good idea that their needs were typical, but they wanted to do some hard research to back it up.

Their research didn't come from the library, the census, or even the Internet. It came from knocking on people's doors. They talked to people about their goals, their needs, and their obstacles. They learned a lot about the neighborhood and the people who shaped it. *"It was a life-changing experience for me,"* says Funston parent and community center coordinator Ada Ayala. *"I thought I had a lot of problems! But I talked to people who have so many more problems and needs than I do. This experience motivated me to learn more, to achieve my goals, and in doing so enabled me to help others better. I wanted to be able to tell them, 'yes, there is help for you.'"*

Ayala and the other parents were true to their goals. After talking to about 700 people in the neighborhood and in the school, they set out to find free programs that would address the top priorities named in the survey: GED classes in English and Spanish, English as a Second Language classes and affordable childcare. Another concern that was brought out in the interviews and surveys was the need for security in and around the building so people would feel secure going there at night. The group had a shoestring budget for security and childcare but did not have money for classes. They negotiated with Malcom X College for over six months and finally managed to bring in the classes for free.

Since the success of the Funton Community Center, LSNA has worked with three other schools (Brentano, Monroe, and Mozart) to open Community Learning Centers using the same model of parent mentor graduates going out into the community, doing surveys and interviews and forming a set of priority programs based on the interview findings. As each new center opens, it becomes part of a network that helps the Center tackle issues that go beyond one single community center, like funding.

(This narrative is excerpted from "The Whisper of Revolution: Logan Square Schools as Centers of Change" written by Susan Adler Yanun and published in *PRAGmatics*, Fall 1999, pp.7-10. Since the article was completed, the Ames Middle School has built on the model of the other centers to develop a curriculum project in which parent mentors worked with students and teachers to develop, implement, and analyze a community survey. This project led to the opening of the Ames Community Learning Center in September 2001. At the Schneider School, parent mentors and community members developed a center which opened in January 2002.

New Networks between School Principals and LSNA

Relationships of trust among school principals and between the principals and LSNA are also an important aspect of social capital. These relationships make possible the ongoing creation and implementation of LSNA's school-based programs and form a basis for the evolving collaboration between the community and the schools. Schools and community groups are characterized by very different cultural norms and forms of organization. According to Amanda Rivera, now principal of Ames Middle School, LSNA's campaign against overcrowding laid the basis for the evolving trust between principals and the community. *"LSNA got the opportunity as a community organization to learn more about the culture of schools, [and] the schools got the opportunity to learn more about the culture of the community."*[5]

Building on the relationships that evolved during the campaign against overcrowding and through principals' participation in creating LSNA's Holistic Plan, LSNA organizers have continued to bring LSNA principals together for quarterly meetings. These meetings provide an unusual opportunity for principals to share problems and strategies with each other, as well as providing a forum for developing new initiatives. According to one principal, *"There's a level of trust that we can be honest . . .. We realize we're all in the same boat."* Another explains, *"We talk about what was successful, what wasn't successful from a previous year. And then maybe we talk about some new ideas, some new initiatives that are coming out...We didn't do this before LSNA got us together."* This group provides an opportunity for principals to collaborate on implementing their schools' Parent-Teacher Mentor Programs and Community Learning Centers. One initiative endorsed by the principals' group was a yearly neighborhood-wide reading celebration, which serves as a year-end culmination to the Links to Literacy campaigns used in the schools. LSNA has brought together the Links'coordinators from all of the schools to exchange ideas and plan a joint outdoor celebration as a reward for the best 600 readers. Students in these schools read more than 150,000 books last year.

NOTES

5. Quotation from "The Whisper of Revolution: Logan Square Schools as Centers of Change," by Susan Adler Yanun, PRAGmatics, Fall 1999, 7-10

Principals perceive LSNA as a valuable provider of technical assistance and funding. As one principal told us, *"It was absolutely mandatory that they were there for us because we could not possibly have done [these programs] on our own...Having someone who functions outside the system actually helps bring resources."*

Third Indicator Area: School Climate

School climate is often one of the first areas of school change addressed by parents and community members. Parents in schools across the country express frustration over school environments that are unsafe, where their children are not disciplined, and where neither they nor their children feel respected. LSNA's school/community partnerships *invite parents into the school,* where the first projects that many parent mentors take on relate to school safety. Having parents in the classrooms through the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program also creates a *more intimate environment for students,* which is reflected in a decrease in discipline referrals. Finally, as parents become more familiar with what is happening in their children's classrooms, they have also started to work with the LSNA Education Committee on a campaign to *improve the climate for learning* in Logan Square classrooms.

Inviting Parents into the School

Parents, teachers, and principals describe the positive impact of having parents in the schools since collaboration with LSNA began. According to one teacher, *"When I came here [7 years ago], I don't remember seeing that many parents in the programs. Now it's parents everywhere. And it's great ...So the children take the good behavior from the parents and the teachers."*

Parents in all the schools formed patrols to ensure safety around the perimeter of the schools. Parent mentors have been a major source for volunteers for the schools' safety patrols and played important roles in organizing many of them. Other safety issues that parents have taken on include getting rid of prostitution around one school, closing down drug houses near schools, organizing neighbors to stay outside while children are going to and from school, and organizing campaigns for traffic safety.

A More Intimate Environment for Students

Parent mentors play an important role in improving the climate within classrooms by giving help to individuals and small groups, keeping students on task, and developing close relationships with students. One major impact of the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program is that it lowers the student/teacher ratio. Parent mentors give students needed individual attention. As one teacher said, *"My parent mentor takes my kids who would be the lowest readers out. Works with them one-on-one. They do the work when she's there."* According to another teacher,

"We all can use an extra set of hands, especially when half the kids are reading way below the norm. The parent mentor I had, I used her for reading. I had her take the students. She has the book, and she knows the assignment. She sits down with the students. These kids get the help they need."

Parents also provide many students with a different kind of adult relationship within the school, leading to more constructive engagement with their classes and subject matter. According to one parent,

"To me being a parent mentor means being able to communicate with the students as well as the teachers. And when you're able to share some of the things that you know about the subjects, it seems to bring out a lot of good in a kid. I've noticed that in certain classrooms that I go to, the kids, they want to participate even more, even the ones that weren't even really doing well. The teachers notice how well they're making progress because they're interested, and I keep their interest going."

A teacher survey conducted by LSNA staff in 1999 reported that 71% of teachers identified improved discipline as an effect of having a parent mentor in their classrooms. As a part of mandatory reporting to the Annenberg Challenge, five schools also reported decreases in discipline referrals. Although they had wide disparity in the number of discipline referrals, all reported a downward trend. For example, one school had a surprisingly large number of referrals, but it went down 37% from 1,416 in 1996 to 885 in 1999. In another school, referrals went down from 66 in 1995-96 to 37 in 1998-1999, a drop partly attributed to losing its older students through elimination of upper grades, but also partly attributed to the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program.

Improving the Climate for Learning

After years of classroom-based collaboration between parents and teachers, LSNA's parent-dominated Education Committee has developed a "Respect for Children Campaign" and recruited more teachers to the committee. In addition to other activities, the members of this committee are working to change schools and classrooms so that the environment for learning becomes more positive. During the fall of 2000, parents on the committee approached the LSNA principals' group with the suggestion of having a joint parent/teacher professional development session on creating a positive climate for learning. As one of the committee members explained,

"We are trying to do something about the respect of teachers for children, and on both sides. We don't want to pick out certain teachers. We don't want to get into arguments. We simply want to say that this is a serious problem."

During the winter of 2001, over 80 parents and teachers from the LSNA schools attended a joint professional development session. The session was a workshop in experiential learning, designed to help both parents and teachers understand what it feels like to be a child who experiences classroom authority that is arbitrary and unfair. Attendees rated the workshop very highly. LSNA has raised funds to hire the facilitator, a Mexican-born actor and educator, as a part-time staff member to develop additional workshops for parents and teachers.

Fourth Indicator Area: Leadership Development

The power of community organizing groups is created through the development of leaders. This indicator area is directly associated with building strong communities, because neighborhood-based leaders keep community organizing groups focused and moving forward on issues that have the highest priority for the community. Opportunities for leadership and leadership development characterize all aspects of LSNA's work in schools. One aspect of leadership development in LSNA consists of the *extensive opportunities for individual and family empowerment within LSNA's programs.* A second aspect of leadership development is LSNA's work in *identifying and training parents and community members to take on leadership roles* within the schools and LSNA. A third aspect is LSNA's work in *supporting civic engagement by parents and youth.*

Individual and Family Empowerment

All parent mentors set personal goals for themselves as part of their participation in the program. Often these include getting a G.E.D., learning English, getting a job, or attending college. All but a handful of the 840 parent mentor graduates over the years have gone on to job training programs, adult education classes, volunteer activities, or leadership roles in the school. Parent mentor graduates have also been hired in large numbers as classroom aides and in other paid paraprofessional positions. As discussed above in the section on social capital, parents consistently tell a story of personal transformation through their involvement in the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program.

As the teacher who coordinated the program at one school explained, *"The parent organizer does all things to have well informed parents in the school. She works with them in all areas—political, emotional, economic."* The assistant principal at the same school commented, *"I just can't tell you what a difference it has made in the lives of our parents."*

LSNA's Community Learning Centers create a safe and accessible environment for entire families to participate in educational and recreational programs. The centers offer homework assistance, adult education, cultural programming, and health services after school and in the evenings. The first center to open, Funston, graduates approximately fifty Spanish GED students a year. LSNA has the highest graduation rate for Spanish GED of all off-campus programs run by the Chicago City Colleges. LSNA is also collaborating with Chicago State University to offer full scholarships and a bilingual teacher certification program for forty-five parent mentors, teacher aides, and other Logan Square community members. This is an important extension of LSNA's work with parents, many of whom see the bilingual teacher certification program as an opportunity to build on the skills, interests, and commitment to improving the educational experience of Latino children that they first identified as parent mentors. In addition to its other education programs, LSNA works with schools to train parents in Family Reading, Family Math, and Character Development.

PARENT MENTOR OVERVIEW: SPRING 2001

Number of Parents Mentors: 114

75% of parent mentors are immigrants

44% of parent mentors have GEDs or high school degrees (US or foreign)

23% of parent mentors are in ESL classes

22% of parent mentors are in GED classes

10% of parent mentors are enrolled in college classes

Leadership Roles in the School

Parent mentor graduates commonly take leadership roles on LSCs and other legally-mandated committees such as the bilingual and principal selection committees. LSNA is active in recruiting and training parents for LSCs and LSNA schools typically have full slates or contested elections and high levels of voter turnout compared with the turnout at many other schools in Chicago. For example, in the last two elections one LSNA school had the highest number of LSC candidates in its district of fifty schools.

Parent mentor graduates have been instrumental in conducting community surveys to help get new community centers started. They also staff community centers and participate on the governing bodies of LSNA's four existing school-based community centers. They also form the backbone of other parent activities at LSNA schools such as parent patrols. In addition, parent mentor graduates and other LSNA leaders coordinate many literacy activities at their schools, including reading with children, conducting library card drives, and creating lending libraries for parents. Principals and parent organizers consistently report that parent mentors and parent mentor graduates form the majority of active parents in their schools.

One of LSNA's education leaders, Bonita, now an LSNA organizer, described her evolution as a leader in the Mozart School. She began coming into the school because she wanted to help with her daughter, who was in a special education class. The LSC president, who was also the chair of LSNA's Education Committee, *"saw me there everyday and pulled me into more activities,"* she explained. *"I ran for the LSC because I wanted more money for special education. We had to fight for it."* Bonita worked with LSNA leaders and organizers to develop her skills in chairing meetings, speaking in public, analyzing school budgets, and advocating for special education services. She told us, *"We brought in a nurse and three therapists. I also learned that the teachers have to take workshops in special ed."*

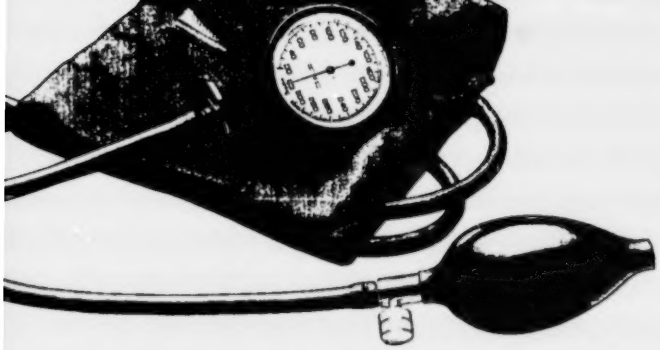
Bonita continued her involvement, working closely with the principal, other parents, and the school/community coordinator on a wide range of activities, including instituting the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program, securing funding for a lending library for parents, doing outreach for a community center, and continuing to advocate for students. Like many other parents who are active in their schools, Bonita has also become a leader within LSNA.

Increasing Civic Engagement

As parents become involved in their schools, they seek out new ways to remain active and build their leadership skills. An organizer's written reports tell how this happened at one school.

"At Mozart, the parents who surveyed residents for the Community Learning Center planning process came back from door-knocking excited, energized, frustrated, and with many stories to tell. Angry homeowners had complained of dirty alleys, disorderly empty lots, and unruly teens. Old ladies had invited them in for tea and unburdened themselves of their life stories. Strangers had offered to share their knowledge in the community center. Out of many such demands for reconnection, the idea of block organizing was reborn." JOANNA BROWN, LSNA REPORT TO MACARTHUR, 1999

"About ten women who participated in the CLC survey developed into a paid block club organizing team which still exists, though new members have been added as old ones got jobs or moved. This "Outreach Team" spent the first two years organizing block clubs and working on block issues (safety, rats) in the Mozart area. More recently, they have worked for LSNA on a variety of issues more widely in the neighborhood—passing out flyers for real estate tax workshops and zoning meetings, collecting 5,000 signatures on a petition for an immigration amnesty and 2,200 signatures for a campaign to expand family health insurance to low-income families. Most recently, they



have become an expert team in signing up families for state-provided health insurance."

JOANNA BROWN, MANUSCRIPT FOR THE MACARTHUR DOCUMENTATION PROJECT, 2001

Future Directions

LSNA's most recent Holistic Plan (May 2001) demonstrates that LSNA is continuing to build on its education work as first outlined in its original Holistic Plan (May 1994). The document also indicates some of the challenges facing the organization and new directions for education organizing. New directions addressed in LSNA's most recent Holistic Plan include an increased focus on teachers, issues of respectful school climate, and involving parent mentors in broader organizing, particularly around housing costs, gentrification and health care. This section of the report looks at those new directions and also changes in the larger context that could affect LSNA's work in schools.

Continuation of the Central Elements of LSNA's Holistic Plan

The three school-related resolutions in the 2001 Holistic Plan continue to focus on the importance of building school/community collaboration. These resolutions build on the strength that LSNA has already demonstrated in developing the community's capacity to support its schools and the schools' capacity to support their community. The resolutions in the 2001 Plan continue to call for Parent-Teacher Mentor Programs, school-based Community Learning Centers, and development of parent leadership.

Challenges Addressed in the 2001 Holistic Plan

Perhaps the greatest current issue in Logan Square is the fact that low- and moderate-income people are being squeezed out of the neighborhood, as multiple forces (the building of high-cost housing, conversion of rental units to condos, and rising rents and housing prices) reduce the supply of affordable housing. As stated in the Plan, "development and rising housing prices have begun to threaten the diverse character of our neighborhood and the well-being of our families."

Public school families are among those most affected by displacement. Two of LSNA's schools each lost more than 100 students over the past year. In other schools, a large majority of families reported being stressed by increased housing costs. In response to this crisis of displacement, LSNA has greatly strengthened its housing organizing. While continuing to organize through its Housing and Zoning committees, LSNA has also increased its effort to involve parent mentors in the housing issue. For example, during the fall of 2001, parent mentors in one school established a housing committee, started leafleting their neighborhoods, and planned additional meetings to address their next steps.

There are also other ways in which LSNA, as a multi-issue community organization, has been pressured to respond to the needs of its parent mentors and other public school families. Immigration and access to health care are two issues that emerged from women who first became active in LSNA's Parent-Teacher Mentor Program. The Holistic Plan's resolution on immigration was first incorporated into the plan in 2000, largely in response to parents' interest in the national campaign for a new amnesty. A new resolution about access to health care, introduced in May 2001, was driven by the fact that many of the parent mentors had no health insurance. On both of these issues, LSNA has joined with metropolitan organizations to organize for policy changes and to provide services to its members. Many of the people active on both issues came out of the Parent-Teacher Mentor Programs.

Action Steps of the 2001 Holistic Plan indicate several other areas in which LSNA's work with schools is continuing to evolve:

- *Attention to maintaining the close connection of Community Learning Centers to the needs and aspirations of the community.* According to the plan, LSNA pledges to "assist the community centers with leadership development, strategic planning, program development, and organizing; to re-survey [three] Community Learning Centers; and to establish a process to evaluate Community Learning Centers'

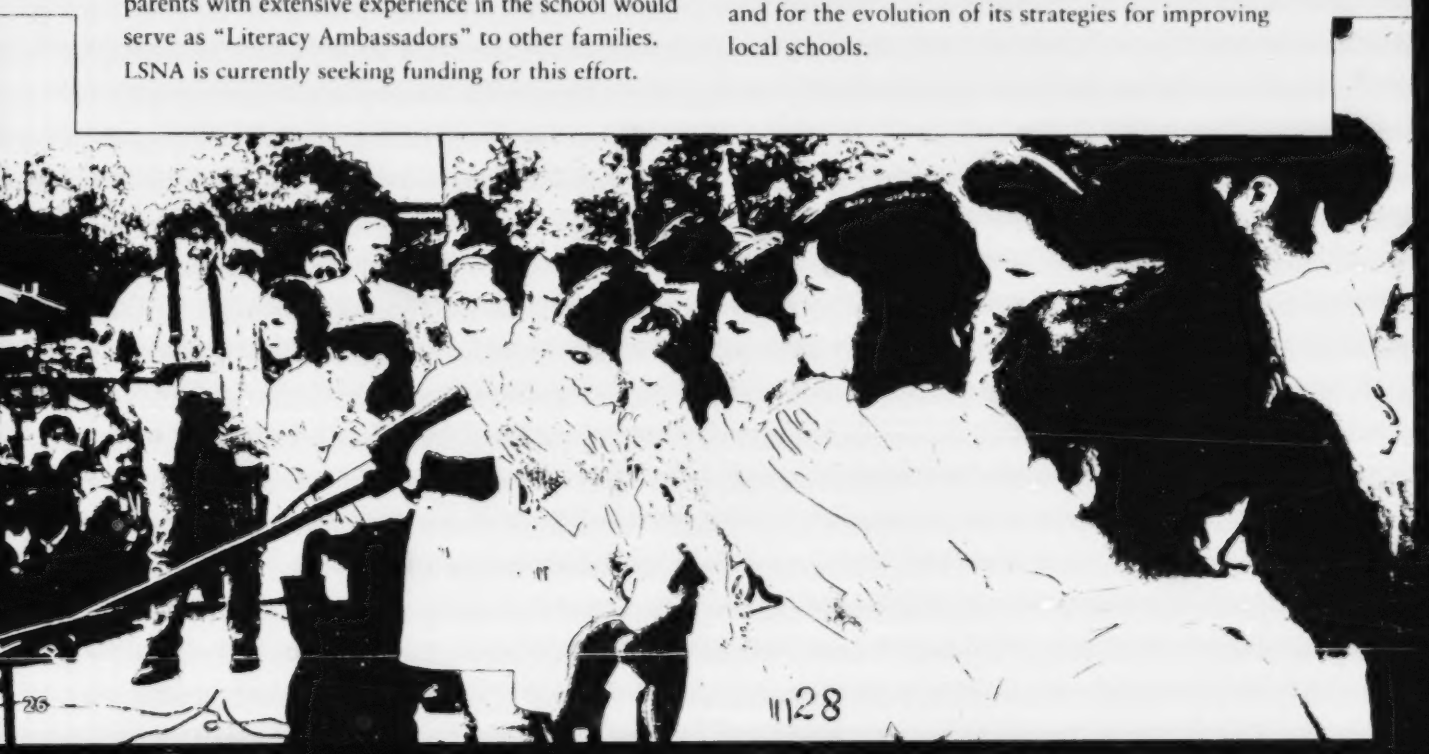
programs and activities." LSNA staff and leaders report that even after community centers have been established, ongoing organizing is necessary to make sure that they stay flexible, vibrant, and responsive to community needs and visions. As other groups look towards LSNA's Community Learning Centers as a model, it will be important for them to understand the underlying approach that makes the Community Learning Centers successful.

- *Increased focus on working with teachers and on improving school climate.* In 2001, LSNA pledges to "support [its ongoing] program to train parents and teacher aides as bilingual teachers [and to] train teachers on the goals and content of the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program to help them become better mentors to the parents." As part of its campaign to improve the climate for learning in Logan Square schools, the Education Committee is working closely with a new LSNA staff person on workshops for teachers, workshops for parents, and workshops for teachers and parents together on issues of creative teaching methods and school climate. Another potential direction is an increased emphasis on high schools, as the children of LSNA's leaders move from the elementary and middle schools to high school. One of LSNA's major goals for next year is to develop a more extensive family literacy program in which teams of teachers and parent mentors would be trained to hold "Literacy Housemeetings" with families on how to read with their children. Thus, parents with extensive experience in the school would serve as "Literacy Ambassadors" to other families. LSNA is currently seeking funding for this effort.

Changes in the External Environment

In part because of its focus on collaboration and relationship-building, LSNA was able to maintain a productive relationship with the Chicago Board of Education and CEO Paul Vallas over the past six years. New leadership at the Board and at the Chicago Teacher's Union may open up new opportunities. LSNA's local work with teachers may be informed by its evolving relationship with the citywide teachers union. The new CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, Arne Duncan, has stated his interest both in broader approaches to literacy and in strengthened school/community collaborations, and appears to seek broader collaborations with groups outside the Chicago Board of Education. New leadership at the Chicago Teacher's Union is also exploring different ways of relating to the community.

In order to survive, LSNA's programs will most likely need a source of permanent, probably public, funding. The community centers have a base of federal funding for the next 2.5 years, but secure funding for the parent mentor program has been difficult to achieve since the end of the Annenberg funding in Chicago. Thus, it is particularly important that district administrators, community organizers, schools, and politicians are increasingly looking towards LSNA's programs as models for parent engagement and the development of community schools. LSNA's citywide relationships have potential implications for LSNA's funding base, for stabilizing its programs and for the evolution of its strategies for improving local schools.



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Appendix A

Definitions of the Indicator Areas

Leadership Development builds the knowledge and skills of parents and community members (and sometimes teachers, principals, and students) to create agendas for school improvement. Leadership development is personally empowering, as parents and community members take on public roles. Leaders heighten their civic participation and sharpen their skills in leading meetings, interviewing public officials, representing the community at public events and with the media, and negotiating with those in power.

Community Power means that residents of low-income neighborhoods gain influence to win the resources and policy changes needed to improve their schools and neighborhoods. Community power emerges when groups act strategically and collectively. Powerful community groups build a large base of constituents, form partnerships for legitimacy and expertise, and have the clout to draw the attention of political leaders and the media to their agenda.

Social Capital refers to networks of mutual obligation and trust, both interpersonal and inter-group, that can be activated to leverage resources to address community concerns. Some groups call this "relational" power, while others describe this process as one of building "political capital." Beginning with relationships among neighborhood residents and within local institutions, community organizing groups bring together people who might not otherwise associate with each other, either because of cultural and language barriers (e.g. Latinos, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans) or because of their different roles and positions, such as teachers, school board members, and parents. Creating settings for these "bridging relationships" in which issues are publicly discussed is the key to moving a change agenda forward.

Public Accountability entails a broad acknowledgement of and commitment to solving the problems of public education. It is built on the assumption that public education is a collective responsibility. Community organizing groups work to create public settings for differently positioned school stakeholders—educators, parents, community members, elected and other public officials, the private and nonprofit sectors, and students themselves—to identify problems and develop solutions for improving schools in low- to moderate-income communities. Through this public process, community organizing groups hold officials accountable to respond to the needs of low- to moderate-income communities.

Equity guarantees that all children, regardless of socio-economic status, race, or ethnicity, have the resources and opportunities they need to become strong learners, to achieve in school, and to succeed in the work world. Often, providing equitable opportunities requires more than equalizing the distribution of resources. Community organizing groups push for resource allocation that takes into account poverty and neglect, so that schools in low-income areas receive priority. In addition, groups work to increase the access of students from these schools to strong academic programs.

School/Community Connection requires that schools become institutions that work with parents and the community to educate children. Such institutional change requires that professionals value the skills and knowledge of community members. In this model, parents and local residents serve as resources for schools and schools extend their missions to become community centers offering the educational, social service, and recreational programs local residents need and desire.

High Quality Instruction and Curriculum indicate classroom practices that provide challenging learning opportunities that also reflect the values and goals of parents and the community. Community organizing groups work to create high expectations for all children and to provide professional development for teachers to explore new ideas, which may include drawing on the local community's culture and involving parents as active partners in their children's education.

Positive School Climate is a basic requirement for teaching and learning. It is one in which teachers feel they know their students and families well, and in which there is mutual respect and pride in the school. Community organizing groups often begin their organizing for school improvement by addressing safety in and around the school and the need for improved facilities. Reducing school and class size is another way in which community organizing groups seek to create positive school climates.

Appendix B

Indicators Project National Advisory Group

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Leadership Development

STRATEGIES reflect actual work of the group.
RESULTS include actual outcomes that we identified and outcomes that the group expects.
DATA SOURCES point to ways to document both actual and expected results.

STRATEGIES

1 Identify and train parents and community members (and sometimes teachers, principals, and students) to take on leadership roles

- LSNA's Parent-Teacher Mentor Program pays parents small stipends for 100 hours of training and work in classrooms
  - LSNA identifies and trains cooperating teachers and places parents in their classrooms to work with children
- LSNA trains graduates of the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program, community members, and students to develop and implement Community Learning Centers (CLCs) by
  - writing, conducting, and analyzing community surveys
  - advocating with school staff, local colleges, and other service providers in order to implement programs that meet community needs
- LSNA trains parents and community members to run for and participate on LSCs, principal selection committees, and bi-lingual committees
- Identify leadership roles for youth (e.g., middle school students participate in developing CLCs, high school students form Community Needs Council)

2 Develop parents (and community members, teachers, principals, and students) as politically engaged citizens

- Parents, youth, and other community members receive training and mentoring in: facilitating meetings; developing agendas; developing legislative and organizing strategies; dealing with public officials; public speaking; evaluating meetings and actions
- LSNA organizers support committees initiated by parents and community leaders (e.g., the newly formed immigration and health committees)

3 Promote individual, family, and community empowerment

- Develop neighborhood-wide youth leadership group for middle and high school students
- The Parent-Teacher Mentor Program and other LSNA activities help parents set educational and career goals
- CLCs provide classes and activities for adults and families such as, GED, ESL, music and dance, homework help, AA, NA, etc.
- LSNA provides childcare and security services at all CLCs

RESULTS

- Hundreds of graduates of the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program are well-informed and articulate about what is happening in Logan Square classrooms and schools
- Groups of parent mentors and graduates of the program initiate and participate in other campaigns (e.g., block organizing, tax abatement, health care)
- LSNA members and leaders form the backbone of LSCs and other leadership bodies in the nine LSNA schools
- LSNA members and leaders have close relationships with teachers and principals
- LSNA members and leaders advocate for student and community needs in the schools (e.g., parent mentors take the initiative in ensuring community input into the principal selection process for the new middle school)
- Community Center Advisory Boards ensure that CLCs continue to meet community needs

- More youth are constructively involved in community activities (e.g., high school students design and run children's camp)
- More parents and community members take leadership roles on LSNA's Education Committee, Board, and Executive Committee
- Parents and community members take leadership in campaigns and lobbying efforts on issues such as: changing state policy to provide funding for community centers; maintaining affordable housing in Logan Square

- Bilingual teacher certification program provides opportunity for receiving college degree and teacher certification.
- High school students advocate for community interests (e.g., more recreational programs) through the Community Needs Council
- Parent-Teacher Mentor Program builds confidence
- Parent mentors able to help and advocate for their children
- Almost every graduate of the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program continues with education or employment
- Adult CLC participants attain GEDs, learn new skills, get jobs
- Community members attain jobs as bilingual teachers
- Parents present new kinds of role models for children
- Children have increased pride in their parents

DATA SOURCES

- Interviews and surveys about parents' sense of efficacy and changing leadership roles
- Observations of organizational and public events
- Presentation of stories about personal change
- Written narratives about personal change
- Voter turnout records
- Local School Council participation record
- Newspaper accounts of LSNA leadership and public involvement

- Records of program participation
- Graduation records from GED programs and bilingual teacher certification programs

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Community Power

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Create a mass base constituency within communities that results in deep membership commitment and large turnout	
• Develop long-term commitment and broadly-shared decision-making around school/community issues through:	• Strong community leadership within LSNA Board and committees
• One-on-ones with parents and community members	• Democratic decision-making within the organization
• Community-wide meetings	• Fidelity to Holistic Plan to strengthen and build the community
• Parent mentor meetings, outreach committees, and Community Learning Center Advisory Boards at LSNA schools	• Ability to sustain campaigns over time, including large membership turnout
• Support for LSC and other school governance committees	• Growth of vibrant parent communities in LSNA schools
• Education Committee representing all LSNA schools	• Ability to maintain school/community connection over time
• Ensure that LSNA continues to represent community interests	• Ability to maintain relationships of mutual respect between community members and professional educators
	• LSNA leadership and participation represents the ethnic, racial, economic, and linguistic diversity of Logan Square
2 Form partnerships for legitimacy and expertise	
• Within LSNA, encourage collaboration among schools, churches, social service agencies, businesses, and other organizations	• Groups seek out LSNA as a partner which can do effective outreach to parents and community, develop parent leadership, and implement high-quality programs in schools
• Collaborate with citywide organizations to bring additional expertise and resources to Logan Square schools	• Schools perceive LSNA as a conduit for funding and as a provider of technical assistance
• Diversity of organizational members of LSNA	• National groups perceive LSNA as a model for school-community partnerships
• Development of programs and campaigns which link different types of issues (e.g., innovative homeownership program for Logan Square teachers)	
3 Create a strong organizational identity	
• Practice reflection, evaluation, and celebration	• Shared stories of leadership development and organizational successes
• Develop deep, long-term relationships between organizers and leaders	• Visibility of LSNA in schools and in the community
• Develop shared vision and goals through Holistic Planning process	• Leaders maintain long-term involvement with LSNA
• Public recognition for LSNA's role in strengthening the Logan Square community (e.g., Chicago Community Trust award for Outstanding Community Service)	• LSNA leaders describe a strong sense of trust and reciprocity among themselves and among leaders and organizers
4 Draw political attention to organization's agenda	
• One-on-ones with politicians and school district leaders (e.g., to advocate for community input into selection of principal for new middle school	• Political leaders respond to and meet with LSNA leaders
• Public meetings and accountability sessions with public officials (e.g., to advocate for new buildings)	• Political leaders and school district officials attend LSNA's public events
• Letter writing campaigns and other lobbying (e.g., to secure funding for Community Learning Centers)	• Public officials and media publicly acknowledge the role LSNA plays in building school/community connections
	• LSNA influences district and state policy
DATA SOURCES	
• Holistic Plans since 1990	• Interviews/surveys of parents and community members
• Other LSNA documents	• Interviews with representatives of community and citywide groups (both LSNA member groups and others)
• Attendance records of meetings and events	• Local School Council minutes
• Interviews with school, community, and political leaders	• Press clippings
• Observations of meetings and events	
• Stories told by LSNA	

Social Capital

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Build networks	
• Organize and support parents within individual schools in Logan Square	• Large, diverse group of parents who are engaged in LSNA programs and other school-based activities
• Do outreach to uninvolved parents and other community members through Parent-Teacher Mentor Program, community centers, and other activities	• Additional parents and community members consistently becoming involved in schools
• Develop Education Committee to bring parents together across schools in Logan Square	• Increased use of federal and state funded programs (e.g., school lunches, child health services)
• Develop Core Committee to bring other community members together with teachers, students, principals, and parents	• Clear articulation of a community-wide approach to the Holistic Plan and other LSNA documents
• Develop network of principals in Logan Square schools	• Pastors, banks, and service agencies advocate for resources and new programs for Logan Square schools
• Connect parents to local and national education organizations and other advocacy groups	• Low-income parents participate in citywide, statewide, and national meetings, conferences, and advocacy efforts
2 Build relationships of mutual trust and reciprocity	
• Support school staff through improving facilities, increasing funding and resources, and administering programs	• Principals and teachers perceive LSNA as an advocate and resource for local schools
• Increase parent engagement in schools and build respect through training and compensating parents for work in classrooms	• Increased communication and understanding among teachers, parents, and students
• Increase community and family participation in schools through Community Learning Centers	• Community perceives schools as a positive asset
• Outreach teams identify community needs and encourage participation in Community Learning Centers and other LSNA activities.	• Parents and community members are informed about school issues
• Encourage parent/community participation in decision-making in schools	• Teachers are informed about community issues and areas of concern
	• Increased number of parents involved in school decision-making bodies (e.g., Local School Councils, bilingual committees, principal selection committees)
3 Increase participation in civic life	
• Support parent, community, and youth involvement in LSNA and other neighborhood activities	• Youth Committee in LSNA identifies issues and develops campaigns
• Support parent and community involvement in the political process, including letter writing, meeting with public officials, giving testimony in public forums, and organizing public actions	• Parents and community members are leaders and spokespeople for LSNA on education and other issues (e.g., block clubs, publicizing existing health care options, advocating changes in health insurance, immigration rights, and affordable housing)
	• Parents and community members are involved in statewide advocacy efforts
DATA SOURCES	
• Interviews and surveys about: parents' sense of efficacy; trust developing between parents and school staff; and parents' involvement with organizations and institutions	• Interviews of students, parents, and staff involved in surveying and resurveying for community centers
• Observations of organizational and public events	• Results of community surveys
• Stories about parents, teachers, and principals working together for change	• Interviews and surveys of teachers about their perception of their relationship with parents
• Sign-in lists at school events (parent-teacher meetings, report card pickups, etc.)	• Voter turnout records
• Enrollment in school lunch programs and other programs	• LSC participation records
	• Media reports about LSNA members and LSNA organizing efforts

Public Accountability

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Create a public conversation about public education and student achievement	
• Engage in one-on-ones to identify parents' concerns about schools • Develop community-wide Education Committee • Bring parents, school staff, and other community activists together to develop a community-wide vision and plan • Invite public officials to attend LSNA events • Ask public officials to address community concerns at LSNA activities and other community events	• Increase in public awareness that quality schools depend on knowledgeable input and support from parents and other community members • Increase in public awareness of the need for additional resources to support children, parents, and other community members
2 Monitor programs and policies	
• Train and recruit candidates for Local School Councils and support elections • Train and support parents in processes of principal selection and evaluation • Monitor construction of new buildings and ensure community access to new buildings	• Parents feel more knowledgeable about schools and the school system, and have increased confidence that their ideas are respected and will influence children's school experience • Increase in participation on Local School Councils and other oversight committees (e.g., bilingual education, special education, principal selection committees)
3 Participate in the political arena	
• Engage in one-on-ones and public meetings with public officials (e.g., campaign against school overcrowding, campaign for state funding for community centers in schools) • Create public presence through lobbying campaigns, letter writing campaigns, etc. • Organize forums during which the community rates candidates for public office	• Development of vocal groups of community members through public sessions with public officials • Actions taken to respond to community members' concerns and ideas • Public officials aware of issues and concerns of Logan Square community and schools • Electoral candidates responsive to LSNA's concerns
4 Create joint ownership/relational culture	

• Develop community-wide planning processes
  ◦ Education Committee (composed of parents, teachers, and principals) identifies major issues and ways to address them
  ◦ Whole organization develops a "Holistic Plan" addressing education, housing, jobs, etc.
  ◦ "Core Committee" of parents, principals, pastors, and other neighborhood leaders helps guide Holistic Planning process
	• Develop structure for regular evaluation of education organizing and programs
	• LSNA education work evaluated yearly by parents, teachers, principals, and other community members
	• Daily processes of Logan Square classrooms and schools are visible to parents and community members

DATA SOURCES • Interviews of LSNA organizers, parents, school staff • Observations of LSNA events, Local School Council meetings, other public meetings	• Interviews with other education advocates, Chicago Public Schools administrators, and other stakeholders • Minutes from LSNA committee meetings and Local School Council meetings • LSNA Holistic Plan and newsletters • Data about participation on Local School Councils • Newspaper clippings

Equity

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1. Increase funding and resources to under-resourced schools	
• Campaign for new buildings to reduce overcrowding • Write grants to raise private and public funding for school-based programs serving adults and children • Lobby state legislators and city administrators to fund Community Learning Centers to provide after-school programming for children and adults • Collaborate with Chicago nonprofits to bring additional resources and programs to parents and children in Logan Square	• Increase in new school facilities: five annexes and two new middle schools built in Logan Square through community efforts during past ten years; campaign underway for new high school • Increase in public and private funds secured by LSNA. Over $500,000 per year since 1998 for: leadership development for parents; training for parents to work with children in classrooms; homework help, cultural and recreational programs for children at Community Learning Centers; security and other support services at after-school Community Learning Centers; and bilingual teacher certification program • Partnerships with community colleges, health clinics, social service agencies, and recreational programs provide GED and ESL instruction, and programs such as AA, Girl Scouts, and family counseling through LSNA's Community Learning Centers
2. Maximize access of low-income children to educational opportunities	

• Focus on literacy
  ◦ Principals, teachers, parents, and students in all LSNA schools participate in Links to Literacy Campaign
  ◦ Parents and staff organize other literacy efforts
• Local School Committee members advocate for improvements in services and resources for special education students
• Children read more books
• Parents and children participate in family reading nights
	• Annual neighborhood reading celebration
	• Lending library for parents
	• More Spanish-language books in school libraries
	• Improved facilities for special education students (e.g., more appropriate classrooms)
	• Improved resources for special education students (e.g., nurses, therapists)
	• Increased teacher participation in professional development about special needs students

3. Match teaching and learning conditions with those in the best schools	
• LSNA trains parents to work in classrooms with children through the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program • Parents and principal look at research and make site visits to identify "best practices" for new middle school • Professional development for teachers and parents on topics such as higher-order thinking skills, school climate, and literacy	• Improved adult/child ratio in Logan Square classrooms • Increased communication between parents and teachers • Implementation of "best practices" in new middle school (e.g., common prep periods for teachers, thematic units) • Changes in instructional practice and classroom management techniques (e.g., increase in problem-solving, increase in positive discipline)

DATA SOURCES

- Newspaper clippings
- LSNA newsletters
- Proposals and reports to funders
- LSNA budgets (1990-2000)
- Schedules of Community Center activities
- Observations of LSNA's programs and public events
- Sign-in sheets from LSNA activities and events
- Student transcripts from bilingual teacher certification program
- Interviews with organizers, parents, principals, and organizations working with LSNA
- Local school council meeting minutes
- Analysis of school budgets (e.g., resources and teachers allocated to special education or bilingual education.)
- Observations of professional development sessions for parents and teachers
- Analysis of school improvement

School/Community Connections

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Create multi-use school buildings	
• Use schools as Community Learning Centers (CLC) • Provide adult literacy, GED, and ESL classes; recreational and cultural programs for youth; family counseling, AA; childcare for participants • Ensure that CLC meet needs of community through Community Boards • Create outreach teams to determine community through community surveys and to resurvey community periodically • Increase in number of adults who receive GEDs; participate in education programs and support services	• Increase in number of children who participate in cultural and recreational activities (e.g., music, art, and dance) • In 2000–2001, over 1,400 adults and children attended CLC programs • Increase in availability of safe, public space in Logan Square • Increase in skills of CLC outreach teams, staff, and Community Boards • Increase in number of parents in leadership and decision-making roles
2 Position the community as a resource	
• Make LSNA central in gaining new buildings and resources for Logan Square schools • Parent-Teacher Mentor Program pays parents small stipend and trains them to work in classrooms • LSNA initiates, develops, and secures funding for CLC • Parents collaborate with middle school teachers and students in a curriculum project focused on creating new CLC • Bring community activities into new middle school • Create forums in which local businesses, churches, agencies, and schools identify ways to support each other • Principals and teachers perceive LSNA as a resource, advocate, and ally	• Teachers, principals, and students perceive parents as valuable resources in the classroom • Teachers and principals perceive community members as committed to furthering their own education and the education of their children • CLC more integrated into life of middle school • Local organizations and businesses provide resources that support schools (e.g., banks develop mortgage program for teachers) • Students interact with parents, professionals, politicians, and businesses in the community (e.g., students met with contractors and wrote about building of new YMCA)
3 Create multiple roles for parents in schools	
• Develop school-based activities which combine programs and organizing • Provide resources and training for parents to take on other leadership roles in the schools (e.g., as members of LSC, BAC, principal selection committee)	• Increase in number of parents working in classrooms • Increase in number of parents and community members working as staff in LSNA school-based programs • Increase in number of parents paid stipends to do outreach for CLCs and other LSNA activities • Increase in number of parents in other volunteer roles and leadership positions in schools • Increase in number of parents trained and hired for other positions within schools
4 Create joint ownership of schools and school decision-making	
• Bring parents, teachers, and principals together in organizing campaigns (e.g., against school overcrowding and for community involvement in principal selection at new middle school) • Develop structures for collaboration between parents, teachers, principals, and LSNA organizers (e.g., Parent-Teacher Mentor Program, CLC Advisory Boards)	• LSNA Education Committee communicates with principals and other teachers about issues of concern (e.g., LSNA Education Committee brings its concerns about school climate to the principals' group, resulting in new joint professional development)

DATA SOURCES

- Observations of Parent-Teacher Mentor Programs, Links to Literacy Celebration, Community Learning Center activities, joint professional development activities, and other public events
- Data from community surveys
- Attendance records for Community Learning Centers
- Proposals for new LSNA programs
- Observation of annual LSNA Congress and Core Committee meetings
- LSNA Holistic Plan
- Interviews with parents, school staff, and others about perceptions of their relationships
- Media accounts of community involvement in schools
- Surveys for planning of Community Learning Centers

High Quality Instruction and Curriculum

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Identifying learning needs, carry out research, and implement new teaching initiatives and structures	
• Train parents to work in classrooms with students • Train teachers how to utilize parents in classrooms (e.g., for reading help, reviewing spelling words, providing cultural knowledge) • Focus on the importance of reading • Increased attention to students most "at risk"	• Teachers have more opportunities to work with small groups of students • Fewer Logan Square students score in bottom quartile on standardized testing • Principals, teachers, parents, and students in all LSNA schools participate in Links to Literacy Campaign • Logan Square students read thousands of books
2 Enhance staff professionalism	
• Provide professional development about "authentic assessment" and higher order thinking skills • Provide professional development about climates for learning	• Higher level of reasoning and problem-solving expected of students in Logan Square schools • Increase in "positive discipline" and respect for students • More students scoring at highest levels on standardized tests
3 Make parents and community partners in children's education	
• Increase parents' understanding of school culture by providing training and placement in classrooms • Encourage parents to read with their children. • Provide educational opportunities for both children and adults through Community Learning Centers • Media uses LSNA as an example of successful parent involvement (e.g., local television and radio stations feature Parent-Teacher Mentor Program)	• Parents' have greater understanding of teachers' expectations • Parents are better able to help children with homework • Parents are better able to ask questions and advocate for children's needs • More parents read with their children • Education becomes a family endeavor • Parents are perceived as role models for children
4 Hold high expectations	
• Campaigns and programs such as Links to Literacy and Family Math demonstrate that parents expect schools to be focused on improving student achievement in reading and math	• Teachers perceive an interested, active parent body with high academic expectations for their children
DATA SOURCES • Standardized test scores • Current curriculum • Funding proposals for new curriculum initiatives • LSNA documents	• Interviews with teachers, principals, parents, and students about the role of parent mentors • Observations of teachers meetings, classes, and professional development activities • Observations of classrooms • Analysis of the type and quality of student work • Analysis of how teachers assess students

Positive School Climate

STRATEGIES	RESULTS
1 Improve facilities	
• Campaigns for new facilities • New buildings completed (five elementary school annexes and two middle schools) • New facilities used for daytime classes for children and after-school activities for adults and children	• Increase in parent, community, teacher, student pride in neighborhood schools
2 Improve safety in and around the school	

• Increase parent and community presence in and around school
  • Parent mentors participate in classrooms
  • "Parent patrol" makes sure children can walk safely on streets near the schools
  • Block clubs organize neighbors to stand on porches when children are going to and from school
• Develop collaborative relationships with local police district
	• Perception of staff, students, and parents that schools are clean and orderly
	• Reduction in number of discipline problems
	• Reduction in number of playground fights and resulting detentions, suspensions, etc.
	• Reduction in gang-related activities in and around schools

3 Create respectful school environment	
• Parent-Teacher Mentor Program trains parents to work in classrooms and trains teachers to establish instructional roles for parents in their classrooms • Graduates of the Parent-Teacher Mentor Program develop and implement "character education" curriculum • Community Learning Centers strengthen schools as centers of community • Campaign to increase mutual respect between teachers and students • Meetings and written materials in Spanish and English • Childcare and food are provided during meetings, and families are welcomed to schools in other ways	• Perception of increased communication among parent mentors, students, and teachers • Perception that parent mentors increase the school's communication with parents who are not involved with the program • Perception of schools as welcoming places for community activities • Perception of increased respect by teachers and principals for parents and children in the community • Low-income, Spanish-speaking parents feel comfortable and welcomed in schools
4 Building intimate settings for teacher/student relations	
• Parent mentors in classroom provide more opportunities for small group work and individual instruction • Students most "at risk" receive more individual instruction (e.g., help with spelling, reading) • Parent mentors explain tasks to students and help keep them focused	• Students have opportunities to talk to adults about social and emotional issues • "At risk" students participate more fully • Classes are less often disrupted by inappropriate student behavior • Teachers' work is greatly enhanced by having parents in the classroom
DATA SOURCES	
• Interviews with organizers, parents, school staff, students, other stakeholders • Observations of schools and classrooms • LSNA reports to funders	• School attendance and discipline records • LSNA organizational documents • Holistic Plan and LSNA newsletters

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Joanna Brown is lead education organizer at Logan Square Neighborhood Association, where she worked in 1993-94 and again from 1997 to the present. She is also a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Chicago, and is writing her dissertation on the experiences of Latina mothers in Chicago public schools. Her masters' thesis documented an experimental bilingual school in the Panamanian indigenous area of Kuna Yala. She has been working in Chicago neighborhoods as a writer and/or organizer since 1980.

Aida A. Nevárez-La Torre, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Education at Temple University and consultant to Research for Action. She is Director of the Professional Development Schools Family Centers and Director of the Bilingual Career Ladder and the Career Advancement for Para-professionals in Education Programs at Temple University. Aida has worked with bilingual teachers documenting their development as teacher/researchers under a Spencer Foundation grant. She also co-edited (with Nitza Hidalgo) a volume for *Education and Urban Society* entitled "Latino Communities: Resources for Educational Change." Her work at Research for Action included a three-year evaluation report (with Eva Gold) of four family literacy initiatives in Philadelphia schools.

Chris Brown is the Director of the Schools and Community Program at the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform. The Schools and Community Program works with parent and community organizations to increase meaningful parent and community involvement in school reform. He is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to organizations, overseeing research and publication projects, and coordinating cross-site visits. Before coming to Cross City, he served as Community Development Specialist at Chicago's United Way/Crusade of Mercy. Previously, he spent seven years as director of the ACORN Housing Corporation of Illinois, a non-profit group providing home ownership opportunities for low and moderate-income families in Chicago's Englewood community. In addition to his professional work with schools and communities, he also serves as a parent volunteer on the Local School Council of Boone School, the Chicago elementary school his two children attend.

Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
is a national network of school reform leaders from nine cities: Baltimore, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Oakland, Philadelphia and Seattle. The Cross City Campaign is made up of parents, community members, teachers, principals, central office administrators, researchers, union officials and funders working together for the systemic transformation of urban public schools, in order to improve quality and equity so that all urban youth are well-prepared for post-secondary education, work, and citizenship.

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Research for Action (RFA) is a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization engaged in education research and reform. Founded in 1992, RFA works with educators, students, parents, and community members to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all students. RFA work falls along a continuum of highly participatory research and evaluation to more traditional policy studies.

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